

a feature which has continued to fascinate readers of the biblical text. Parallelism has both delighted us, for its effect is unmistakable, and frustrated us, for the way that it works is elusive. We have sought it by collecting and classifying its types, as Lowth began, and when the three original types could not capture its essence we added more types and subtypes; so that now we hear not only of synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic parallelism, but also of incomplete parallelism, staircase parallelism, janus parallelism, metathetic parallelism, and so on. Given the powers of discrimination that the human mind possesses, the longer we examine parallelism the more discrete types we are likely to find.

I do not come to propose new types, nor to reclassify old ones. What is sorely needed is a fresh approach to parallelism as a whole. We have been so busy dissecting the trees, branches, and leaves that we have lost sight of the forest. The forest is a dynamic microworld in which many different components function in relation to each other. It is not enough to recognize the individual components; we have not perceived the essence of the forest until we have seen that its various components belong to a multifaceted, balanced system. Parallelism, like a forest, has many aspects. Some are well known, others little studied. But more than anything, we must begin to see all these aspects—and all types and subtypes of parallelism—as parts of a total system of linguistic usage.

Parallelism is a linguistic phenomenon. It uses language—words, phonemes, grammar—in a variety of interesting ways. It is therefore fitting that we should approach it from a linguistic perspective, as well as from the perspective of biblical studies. Great advances have been made in both of these areas since Lowth's time, and there is no reason that his views of parallelism should remain canonized. But though we leave these views behind in search of more adequate ones, the fundamental insight which he provided should not be lost. Lowth may have been mistaken in some of his ideas, and he was certainly limited in his linguistic knowledge, but he was right about the essence of parallelism; it is a *correspondence of one thing with another*. Parallelism promotes the perception of a relationship between the elements of which parallelism is composed, and this relationship is one of correspondence. The nature of the correspondence varies, but in general it involves repetition or the substitution of things which are equivalent on one or more linguistic levels. The notion of *equivalence*, and its counterpart *opposition* or *contrast*, will emerge again and again in the various areas of linguistics to which we will have recourse; but the amazing thing is that it is already present in a primitive form in Lowth's observation that "equals

refer to equals, and opposites to opposites.” Lowth, however, did not understand this as broadly as we do, for he did not understand linguistics as we do. We are able to see many more equivalences and oppositions on many more linguistic levels. It is these linguistic equivalences that we wish to examine in greater depth, for they constitute the phenomenon called parallelism.

The definition of parallelism offered here is much broader than that found in most biblical studies, in which parallelism is usually considered to involve only semantic and/or grammatical equivalences and to operate only between two or more consecutive lines. This narrow view of parallelism would seem to be a legacy of Lowth, who spoke of the correspondence of one verse, or line, with another. Once we admit smaller segments as being parallel—e.g., words, phrases, even sounds—though the lines to which they belong are not parallel, we raise the incidence of parallelism within a text. And if we do not restrict our search for linguistic equivalences to adjacent lines or sentences, but take a global view, finding equivalences anywhere within a text, we raise the incidence of parallelism still more. This more encompassing definition of parallelism is the one developed by Roman Jakobson, and it should be borne in mind that it differs from the definition used by most biblical scholars. Jakobson’s view is preferable because it enables us to unify phenomena whose relationships have not been perceived. For instance, the device known as *inclusio*, in which the first and last lines of a text contain the same words or phrases, is actually a form of parallelism and should be recognized as such.² (However, in actual practice, most of our examples of parallelism will come from adjacent lines, for that is where it is most manifest.) Furthermore, Jakobson’s approach allows us to see more readily that the parallelisms touted as indicators of poetry are no different from the linguistic equivalences in prose texts. Certain linguistic usages, including a systematic exploitation of equivalences, are a mark of biblical style as a whole. They are not limited to one genre, although they may be more prominent in the one usually called poetry.

PARALLELISM AND POETRY IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

This brings us to the difficult matter of prose vs. poetry as it relates to the Bible, and especially as it relates to parallelism. Biblicists have long

equated parallelism with poetry. No doubt this is another of Lowth's legacies, although a careful reading of his Lecture III will show that he recognized "this artifice of composition" in prose as well. Nevertheless, since biblical poetry lacks any easily discernable meter, or any comparable feature that marks it as verse,³ the burden of identification came to rest on the presence of parallelism—more specifically, on the parallelism of consecutive lines. This is not to say that every line of poetry had to be paralleled, but that, by and large, where there was parallelism there was poetry. (When taken to an extreme this resulted in the "discovery" of snippets of poetry in otherwise prosaic contexts.)

The matter rested here, with little argument and much vagueness, until the recent discussion by James Kugel in *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*. Kugel not only questioned the equation of parallelism with poetry, but attacked the whole notion that one can differentiate prose from poetry in the Bible. It is the first point that is of interest to our study, but Kugel's line of argument cannot be understood without reference to his view of the prose-poetry issue.

Kugel begins by citing a number of parallelisms from Genesis and Exodus, that is, passages normally considered prose, and goes on to find parallelism⁴ in the Moabite Stone, an inscription whose very literariness may be questioned. This leads him to the observation that "the same traits that seem to characterize Hebrew 'poetry' also crop up in what is clearly not poetry" (*Idea*, 63). This, of course, is true, and it applies not only to parallelism but to other rhetorical figures. The converse, that not all lines in poetry are parallelistic or symmetrical, is also shown, mainly from Ps 119 and 122. In other words, Kugel sees, as I have already suggested, that not all poetry is parallelisms and not all parallelisms are poetry. But this does not prove that there is no difference between prose and poetry, as Kugel would appear to have us believe;⁵ it only proves that the distinction cannot be made solely on the basis of parallelism. Kugel falls prey to a faulty premise. He tacitly accepts the equation of parallelism with poetry (even as he rejects it—*Idea*, 70) and then, wherever he finds parallelism he is forced to call it poetry—but, since he knows it isn't poetry, he calls it "elevated style." The truth is, as linguists have shown (cf. Hiatt and Werth), that parallelism is not in and of itself a mark of poetry as opposed to prose, or even of elevated style as opposed to ordinary discourse; it is a common feature of all language. And yet, as we will soon see, in a certain sense parallelism is the essence of poetry.⁶

But we leave this apparent paradox for the moment and return to Ku-

gel's argument. Kugel's struggle with terms like "prose" and "poetry" is part of a large reluctance he has about any form of labelling of the biblical text outside of the Bible's own. In the end, he will not even admit that it can be called literature: "One might well ask: what is literary about the Bible at all? Certainly it does not identify itself as literature, and often such self-definition as does occur seems clearly to place it elsewhere" (*Idea*, 303).⁷ Clearly, if Kugel rejects the Bible as literature—i.e., as "artful composition"—then to distinguish literary subtypes on the basis of artfulness becomes a meaningless exercise. Thus Kugel pushes his view to an extreme that in the end threatens to defeat his purpose.

But despite what has been perceived as Kugel's nihilism, he fortunately does not heed his own advice and goes on to discuss those features which make the text literary, or in his words, elevated in style. Here he has something to contribute to the prose-poetry problem and to the role of parallelism in it.

If one puts aside the notions of biblical poetry and prose and tries to look afresh at different parts of the Bible to see what it is about them that distinguishes one from another, it will soon be apparent that there are not two modes of utterance, but many different elements which elevate style and provide for formality and strictness of organization. Consistently binary sentences, an obvious regard for terseness, and a high degree of semantic parallelism characterize some sections; less consistent (and less consistently semantic) parallelism is found in other parts. . . . This represents a continuum of organization or formality, with parallelism of different intensity and consistency characterizing a great span of texts. [*Idea*, 85]

Kugel is saying, and I basically agree, that there is a continuum of elevated style in the Bible. Some passages are more elevated than others, but, to some extent, one can find this elevated style throughout. Elevated style is largely the product of two elements: terseness and parallelism. Where these two occur to a high degree we have what would be called (by everyone but Kugel) poetry; where they are largely (but never entirely) lacking, we have less-poetic expression, which corresponds to what we call prose.

It is not parallelism per se, but the predominance of parallelism, combined with terseness, which marks the poetic expression of the Bible. And since the difference between poetic and less-poetic sections is a matter of degree, we would not expect different *kinds* of parallelism in "prose" and "poetry," but only different perceptions of their dominance.⁸ The perception of the dominance of parallelism in poetry is not only a factor of its

quantity, for large amounts can be found in prose, but also a factor of the terseness which tends to produce phonetic and syntactic balance in parallel lines. As we will see shortly, parallelism appears to be the constructive principle on which a poem is built, while a prose passage might have just as much parallelism but not seem to be built on this structure.

The notion of terseness plays a central role in another description, not unlike Kugel's, of the essence of poetic expression. Speaking in reference to a translation of a Chinese poem, W. Empson says:

Lacking rhyme, metre, and any overt device such as comparison, these lines are what we should normally call poetry only by virtue of their compactness; two statements are made as if they are connected, and the reader is forced to consider their relations for himself. The reason why these facts should have been selected for a poem is left for him to invent; he will invent a variety of reasons and order them in his own mind. This, I think, is the essential fact about the poetical use of language. [24-25]

What is left, Empson asks, if we strip away all devices and structures from a poem? Only its "compactness" and its sense of "connectedness." These correspond to what we have been calling terseness and parallelism. A poem distills and condenses its message, removing "unnecessary" words and leaving only the nucleus of the thought. At the same time, without losing its terseness, it constructs relationships between its parts such that the final product is unified.

Relevant to all of this is the paratactic style of biblical poetry. The lines are placed one after another with no connective or with the common, multivalent conjunction *waw*; rarely is a subordinate relationship indicated on the surface of the text. This has bearing both on the terseness of the poem and on its connectedness. The lines, by virtue of their contiguity, are perceived as connected, while the exact relationship between them is left unspecified. Empson understood that such contiguity creates the impression of connectedness and forces the reader to "consider their relations for himself" and to "invent a variety of reasons" to explain the relationship.⁹ Here parallelism plays a significant role, for parallel lines are perceived as "more" connected. Parallelism, because it involves linguistic correspondences, increases the feeling of connectedness between its parts; in parallelism there is no doubt that "two statements are made as if they were connected," so the reader cannot avoid considering their relationship. It is parallelism more than anything else that creates the perception of "couplets" in biblical poetry. And because the lines in these couplets are terse, that is, stripped

of all but their essential components, they tend to correspond in the number of components that remain, thereby appearing "balanced" in length or rhythm.¹⁰ In this sense we can say that biblical poetry is characterized by a high incidence of terse, balanced parallelism.

PARALLELISM AND POETRY IN LINGUISTIC STUDIES

The definition of poetry and the place of parallelism in it has occupied not only biblical scholars but also linguists. At the center of this effort was Roman Jakobson, who, probably more than any other person, has influenced the linguistic study of parallelism in the many languages in which it is used (cf. Fox). For Jakobson, parallelism—and, as mentioned earlier, he used the term in a broader sense than do most biblical scholars—is the core of poetic language. His most famous pronouncement on the subject, piercingly insightful and maddeningly general, states that "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination. Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence" (LP, 358). The same idea appears in a different form in his "Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry": "One may state that in poetry similarity is superimposed on contiguity and hence 'equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence'" (602).

There are a number of terms that require explanation, and, to the extent feasible, I will present them in Jakobson's own words. "Selection" and "combination" [this also corresponds to "similarity" and "contiguity," "paradigmatic" and "syntagmatic"] are "the two basic modes of arrangement used in verbal behavior." One selects from a group of similar or paradigmatic elements, and one then arranges the selected item, along with items selected from other groups, into a contiguous or syntagmatic chain. As Jakobson puts it:

If "child" is the topic of the message, the speaker selects one among the extant, more or less similar, nouns like child, kid, youngster, tot, all of them equivalent in a certain respect, and then, to comment on this topic, he may select one of the semantically cognate verbs—sleeps, dozes, nods, naps. Both chosen words combine in the speech chain. The selection is produced on the base of equivalences, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymy and antonymy, while the combination, the build up of the sequence, is based on contiguity. [LP, 358]

We can illustrate using Jakobson's own example. If we take a sentence like

1. The child sleeps.

and apply to it Jakobson's principle in which equivalent elements (those in the same paradigmatic class) are arranged in a contiguous sequence, it yields sentences like

2. The child sleeps; the youngster dozes.
3. The child, the little tot, gently dozes and sleeps.
4. The child dozed off, and, as they talked, the youngster slept.

It is clear from sentences 2 and 3 that the type of parallelism found in the Bible is at least one realization of Jakobson's principle. Actually, sentence 4 could be considered a parallelism, too; in fact, "the principle of equivalence appears to be equated with parallelism" (Werth, 24).

The parallelisms in these examples involve semantic classes (words for "child" and "sleep") and grammatical classes (nouns and verbs). But this does not exhaust the linguistic classes that come into play in parallelism, for in Jakobson's words, "pervasive parallelism inevitably activates all the levels of language" (GPRF, 423); so phonetic and phonologic equivalences, as well as lexical and grammatical ones, will be activated in parallelism. Jakobson thus subsumes rhythm, rhyme, and meter under his definition of parallelism. Parallelism alone, in this broad sense, comes to be equated with "the poetic function": "Or, to quote another master and theoretician of poetic language, G. M. Hopkins, the artifice of poetry 'reduces itself to the principle of parallelism': equivalent entities confront one another by appearing in equivalent positions" (GPRF, 423). This is not far from Kugel's statement, arrived at from a different direction, that "it would be incorrect to call parallelism a rhetorical figure or trope. . . . It was more like *the trope*, the one shape of elevated speech" (*Idea*, 86).

Kugel's "elevated speech" includes prose and poetry but presumably excludes ordinary discourse. Jakobson's "poetic function" is a more abstract concept. It is used most often in connection with poetry or poetic language, but actually it is broader than "poetry" and "elevated speech," for it may occur in all speech.

Jakobson outlines six functions of language which may be present in a message in any combination (LP, 353-57). The *referential* function orients the message toward the referent or context—the person or object being discussed. The *emotive* function focuses on the addresser, expressing his

attitude about the message. The *conative* function orients toward the addressee, often employing vocatives and imperatives. The *phatic* function sets up and maintains contact between the addresser and addressee, and often consists of ritualized or stereotyped exchanges like "How are you?" In the *metalingual* function, language is used to explain itself; words define or gloss other words or messages, as in "What do you mean?" The *poetic* function is "the set (*Einstellung*) toward the MESSAGE as such, focus on the message for its own sake" (LP, 356). The poetic function is, of course, present in poetry, but it is not limited to poetry; nor is the poetic function the only function found in poetry. "Any attempt to reduce the sphere of poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification. Poetic function is not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant, determining function, whereas in all other verbal activities it acts as a subsidiary, accessory constituent" (LP, 356). Indeed, parallelism, which is the way in which the poetic function manifests itself, is illustrated by Jakobson in ordinary speech: *Joan and Margery*, with the shorter term before the longer, sounds better than *Margery and Joan*; a speaker prefers *horrible Harry*, because of its alliteration, to *dreadful Harry*. Once again, but from a linguist instead of a biblicist, we see that the same device which marks poetry as poetic also occurs in non-poetic verbal art and even in ordinary speech.

It is, then, not the mere presence, even in large amounts, of the poetic function that distinguishes poetry, but its "dominance." In poetry, the poetic function overrides the other functions. This cannot be shown by a quantitative measure; the dominance of the poetic function cannot be calculated solely by the number of parallelisms in a text. True, as Jakobson has shown in his many analyses of Russian, English, French, and even biblical poems, there is plenty to be found in these. But when parallelisms were sought in prose, linguists discovered that there was also much recurrence of sound, words, and grammar in such things as newspaper articles, modern fiction, and scholarly treatises. In fact, one can hardly surpass the telephone directory for its repetitive patterns of phonological, lexical, and morphological items (Werth, 54), and the same can be said of the Bible's genealogical lists.¹¹ A computer study of parallelism¹² on the sentence level from a cross-section of standard English prose published in the United States in 1961 shows that of a sample of 7315 sentences, 46% contained at least one parallelism (Hiatt). Nonpoetic texts not only have parallelism—they have a lot of it!

The question is not how much parallelism a text has, but how much of it

is effective and meaningful in terms of focusing the message on itself (the poetic function). There is bound to be a certain amount of random repetition of equivalent linguistic categories in any kind of writing; since a language has a limited number of phonemes and morphemes, they will, sooner or later, be used again within a text. And when it comes to lexical-semantic items, which are less limited than phonemic and grammatical ones—if one continues to discuss a particular subject, one is bound to use the same or similar terms to refer to it (cf. Werth, 60). It is really a question of the “poetic effect” of these parallelisms—their “psychological validity” or “perceptibility,” or how striking they are (Werth, 61).¹³ The poetic effect is the result of an interaction between verbal form and meaning (Werth, 63). One cannot simply list formal equivalences without taking into account their semantic impact, for one does not know a priori which equivalences or oppositions are perceptible or meaningful to the reader. Werth, whose critique of Jakobson is reflected in the foregoing remarks, suggests that

the impact of the repetition varies according to the type of repetition . . . and the type of linguistic unit. . . . For example, simple phonological repetition is usually euphonious [has no relevance to meaning], though it can be used to give emphasis to a higher level repetition. . . . Simple lexical repetition almost always carries emphasis rather than being purely euphonious. . . . Much the same is true for simple syntactic repetition. Lexical category repetition would tend to lack impact, though syntactic category repetition . . . would almost always be emphatic . . . , as in antithesis. . . . Semantic repetition (i.e., complete or partial synonymy), of course, occurs only at the lexical and syntactic levels. [68]

Werth here distinguishes three types of effects: semantic effects, emphatic effects, and euphonious effects. The effect varies according to the type of parallelism, with semantic parallelism having the greatest effect and phonological repetition having the least. (We shall see in the following chapters that biblical parallelism in “poetry” has a great deal of semantic and syntactic parallelism—precisely the kinds that Werth finds poetically meaningful.) But Werth also notes that the notion of effect is essentially subjective and still beyond the capabilities of linguistics to identify and describe formally (cf. also Erlich, 26).

Some of the same ideas that Werth expressed in 1976 as an attack on Jakobson appear in L. Waugh’s 1980 clarification in support of Jakobson’s views. I cite those that explain, once again, the relationship between parallelism and poetry, and that correlate with the ideas presented so far.

Waugh, like the others, notes that there are parallelisms in prose, but she emphasizes that despite their presence, they are not systematically

used there—they do not constitute *the constructive device* of the text as they do in poetry.

This is not to say that in prose there are no parallelisms or repetitions or any other of the devices particularly associated with poetry; but rather to say that such symmetries are not the constructive device of prose and are not as systematically used. . . . Such parallelisms as may occur in prose are subordinated to the referential (or other) function. And they are used . . . only when their use would not contradict or combat the main referential thrust of the discourse. . . . Similarly, equivalence relations of various sorts . . . may be important for relations within prose, but again it should be repeated that equivalence does not thereby become the constitutive device of the sequence. [64–65]

“Constitutive device” means the formal device upon which the poem is constructed; this is apparently what Jakobson meant by “equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence” (LP, 358), and it is a crucial part of his definition of the poetic function.

The matter of the perceptibility of parallelism is touched on by Waugh’s next comment.

Of course, the other side of equivalence is difference and the other side of similarity is dissimilarity. By projecting equivalence (and perforce difference) into the axis of combination, the *contrast* between or within parallelistic elements comes to the fore and indeed contrast, as much as equivalence, becomes an important part of the structuration of the poem. . . . [as E. Holenstein indicates] “In addition to the projection of the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination, there is also in poetry a projection of the principle of contrast for the significative, selective, and combinatorial operations into the level of a patent ‘palpable,’ and ‘perceptible’ form. . . .” In the referential use of language, contrast very often resides not in elements linked by various equivalence relations but rather in elements which are in simple contiguity with each other. The poetic function is different from the strictly referential function by the strong *linkage of contrast with equivalence*. [65]

It is the idea of *contrast*, perceptible opposition, that is important in the poetic function. For it is not only that parallelism involves equivalence, but that within that equivalence there is an opposition. For example, one can parallel any adjective with any other adjective and create a morphological parallelism, but the combination of *the weak boy // the strong boy* is, under normal circumstances, a more effective parallelism than *the weak boy // the blond boy* because within the equivalent terms *weak* and *strong* there is an inherent contrast, whereas this contrast does not exist between

II

THE LINGUISTIC STUDY OF BIBLICAL PARALLELISM

It is not surprising, in view of the nexus between poetry and parallelism, that few biblical studies start out focused on parallelism. They begin, rather, as studies of biblical poetry which, because of its nature, sooner or later include or become studies of parallelism. Thus for the history of the study of biblical parallelism one must survey the history of the study of biblical poetry. Fortunately, a large part of this research is now available: Kugel traces the "idea of biblical poetry" from postbiblical times until Lowth, and post-Lowthian studies are summarized in O'Connor, *HVS*. So it remains only to give a brief account of the most recent studies, with respect to their stance on the linguistic analysis of parallelism.¹

Most contemporary scholars have abandoned the models of Lowth and his successors and are seeking new models for a reassessment of biblical poetry. Almost all of them (e.g., Collins, Cooper, Geller, Greenstein, O'Connor, Pardee—and Kugel is the exception here) have looked to linguistics for a model. In this they are not unlike scholars of other poetic traditions, for, despite some valid criticism of its methodology, linguistics is fast becoming the prism through which poetry is viewed. This prism may in time be replaced by another, but for now it is showing us a spectrum of features that was never visible before.

Perhaps the most obvious linguistic feature that recent studies have called to our attention is syntax. Almost all current studies of biblical poetry center on syntactic analyses; the analysis may be on the level of sur-

face structure, major syntactic components or constituents, or the deep structure—but in one way or another, a description and/or comparison of the syntax of adjacent lines is involved. When a certain degree of matching or correlation of the syntax of adjacent lines is recognized, the scholar begins to speak of parallelism, and, indeed, may define parallelism in terms of this syntactic matching. What is confusing, albeit interesting from the point of view of the history of this scholarship, is that each scholar, because he is looking at a different structural level, has a different threshold at which point two lines are deemed parallel.

Terence Collins, for instance, whose 1978 study is one of the earliest of this new wave, examines the constituents of a sentence (subject, object, verb, modifier of the verb) and finds that these occur in four basic patterns which yield four Basic Sentences.² Since the order of the constituents is not significant, and the constituent may consist of one of a number of form classes (e.g., subject may be pronoun, noun, noun phrase, noun clause) it is clear that Collins is not operating on the outermost surface structure of the text. But neither is he reaching the deep structure, for he considers *אני ידעתי אפרים*, "I knew Ephraim," and *וישראל לא נכחד ממני*, "And Israel was not hidden from me" (Hos 5:3) to be two different basic sentences (NP¹—V—NP² and NP¹—V—M). (A generative linguist would see that this verse involves both active-passive and positive-negative transformations and could be considered two realizations of one basic sentence, if one works on the level of deep structure.) Collins then examines poetic lines from the prophetic corpus and finds that there are four general Line-Types:

- I The line contains only one Basic Sentence.
- II The line contains two Basic Sentences of the same kind, such that all of the same constituents appear in both sentences.
- III The line contains two Basic Sentences of the same kind, but some of the constituents do not appear in both (i.e., there is ellipsis).
- IV The line contains two different Basic Sentences.

Collins goes on to document occurrences of each Line-Type in all its permutations, called Line-Forms, and makes a number of significant observations about the frequency and patterning of these Line-Forms in various prophetic books. My interest in his study, however, is not in what he has to say about prophecy or poetry, but in what he has to say about parallelism. Because Collins sticks with the old notion that parallelism is a semantic phenomenon, he fails to realize that he had in his hands an important tool

for analyzing parallelism in its grammatical aspect. In reality, at least three of his Line-Types—II, III, and IV (and Type I, too, if taken together with an adjacent line)—potentially contain parallelism. But it is only in Type II that he sees the connection with parallelism, and to a lesser extent in Type III. Nevertheless, despite this severe limitation, Collins does perceive that there is a certain tension between his system of categorization and the common system of semantic classification of parallel lines. And it is here that he finds the weakness of the latter—its inappropriateness for describing poetic lines.

In most treatments of the subject, this kind of line [Line-Type II] is taken to be *the typical* line of Hebrew poetry, but it is questionable whether this status of pre-eminence is really warranted. One suspects that the emphasis placed on such lines is due chiefly to the fact that they provide the best illustrations of semantic parallelism. If this latter is regarded as the hall-mark of Hebrew poetry, then it is natural that these lines should be elevated to the position of some kind of “pure ideal” of *the* Hebrew line and approached with quasi-metaphysical awe. An analysis based on grammatical structure makes it clear that such an attitude is quite unfounded. Type II accounts for scarcely a quarter of the lines in the prophets. . . .

It is true that semantic parallelism appears at its best in these lines, but when we try to use it as a criterion for classification we immediately meet with difficulties . . . in classifying lines according to semantic content we are often led to ignore the more basic structural patterns a poet is using. Two lines may have the same constituents repeated according to a specific pattern, and yet semantically they could go very different ways . . . it is the structural [i.e., grammatical] classification of lines that is the basic one. [92–93]

In an important advance over earlier studies, Collins puts grammar ahead of semantics as the key to the description of Hebrew poetic patterning, although, to be sure, he recognizes that the two interconnect (cf. 229). He fails only to realize that grammatical structuring may be involved in parallelism no less than semantic structuring. This failure, common though it is in studies from the last two centuries, is all the more unfortunate because its antidote was already present in Lowth's definition of parallelism. Lowth identified as parallel two propositions equivalent in sense *or* “similar . . . in the form of Grammatical Construction.” His successors concentrated on the first definition (i.e., similar in sense) and ignored the second. It has only been with the rise of modern linguistics, especially generative grammar, that biblical scholars have begun seriously to analyze the grammatical structure of poetry (as Collins does) and to realize that from this analysis may emerge a new way to define parallelism (as Collins does not).

The grammatical approach is espoused in a study by Stephen Geller, prepared independently of Collins's work at about the same time. Like Collins, Geller analyzes the grammatical constituents, but he is able to move to a deeper grammatical level than Collins because he introduces the idea of the "reconstructed sentence." By reconstructing the one basic sentence underlying the two parallel lines, Geller is able to fill in ellipsed terms and to equate on a deeper level constituents that are "incongruent" on the surface level. So, for example, Geller (*Parallelism*, 17) shows that in

2 Sam 22 : 14

ירעם מן שמים ה'
ועליון יתן קולו

YHWH thundered from heaven;
Elyon sent forth his voice.

the terms ירעם, "thundered" and יתן קולו, "sent forth his voice," although grammatically incongruent, are nevertheless grammatically "compatible" because they serve the same function in the reconstructed sentence, which Geller diagrams as

ה'	מן שמים	ירעם
עליון		יתן קולו
YHWH	from heaven	thundered
Elyon		sent forth his voice

[“From heaven” belongs to both lines but is ellipsed in the second.]

Geller considers both clauses as different realizations of the same underlying sentence, while Collins would consider this verse as Line-Type IV, a line containing two different Basic Sentences. Geller's analysis is therefore on a deeper linguistic level than Collins's; it penetrates deeper into the underlying grammatical structure of the lines.

Geller's study is also superior to Collins's from the point of view of the study of parallelism, for, as the title of his book (*Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry*) shows, he is interested specifically in the phenomenon of parallelism; he is not dealing with it incidentally in the context of a study of poetry. This book was inspired by the work of Roman Jakobson, and its purpose was to establish a "method for the analysis of major aspects of parallelism, with emphasis on grammatical and semantic parallelism" (4).³ Thus grammatical parallelism, which Collins let slip through his fingers, is the major focus of Geller's work, although he is always aware of semantic parallelism as well.

Grammatical parallelism reaches its ultimate prominence in Edward

Greenstein's "How Does Parallelism Mean?" Cognizant of the work of Collins, Geller, and others, Greenstein goes farther and makes grammatical parallelism serve as the definition for all parallelism. Parallelism for Greenstein is the repetition of a syntactic pattern, regardless of the semantic content; in other words, parallelism is grammatical parallelism. Now, to be sure, grammatical parallelism has long been *part* of the definition of parallelism—from Lowth's dictum and Casanowicz's definition which Greenstein cites,⁴ to the recent studies that I have been discussing; but Greenstein is the first biblicist to *limit* parallelism to grammatical parallelism alone. This would mean, theoretically at least, that the same semantic content expressed in syntactically different clauses would not be considered parallel; and that two syntactically similar clauses, no matter how different their contents, would automatically be parallel. (I am speaking of adjacent or juxtaposed clauses.) Now such extremes are rare, because grammatical and semantic parallelisms generally co-occur; but our theoretical constructions do exist. A verse like

Ps 106:35

וַיִּתְעַרְבוּ בַּגּוֹיִם
וַיִּלְמְדוּ מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם

They intermingled with the nations;
They learned their ways.

is semantically parallel but not syntactically parallel (even on the level of deep structure—see below); while a verse like

Ps 133:5

טֶרֶף נָתַן לִירָאָיו
יִזְכֹּר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ

Food he gives to his fearers;
He remembers his covenant forever.

is syntactically parallel on the surface structure (although one line has an indirect object and the other has an adverb), but the semantic relationship between the lines is not immediately apparent (cf. also Ps 133:4a and 5a). To be sure, these verses are somewhat out of the ordinary. As Greenstein explains, grammatical and semantic parallelisms tend to co-occur because there is a psychological nexus between structure and meaning.

Most significantly parallelism contributes to the meaning of Biblical verse by structuring the ways in which we perceive its content. The presentation of lines in parallelism has the effect of reinforcing the semantic association between them. It has long been observed that when discrete materials appear to us in similar form, we are led to seek, and find, some meaningful correlation between them. This, for example, is the underpinning principle

of rhyme: rhyme creates or tightens an association between two or more words or phrases. Repetition of syntactic structure, which is what I have explained as parallelism, can perform the same function. The psychological nexus between semantic sense and syntactic structure has been demonstrated experimentally. When subjects were presented with a sentence of a particular grammatical form and were then asked to produce another sentence having the same form, subjects tended to formulate a sentence that not only mirrored the structure of the model but also echoed something of its semantics. For example, the test sentence *The lazy student failed the exam* elicited such responses as: *The smart girl passed the test. The industrious pupil passed the course. The brilliant boy studied the paper.* [64]

This statement has important implications for understanding parallelism, some of which will be further explained in subsequent chapters, but for now I will comment on its relevance to Greenstein's insistence that parallelism is exclusively a matter of grammar. It is true that a similarity in structure leads to a perception of some correlation in meaning. We can see this at work in Ps 111:5: we tend to seek, and find, a semantic relationship between the two lines even though there are no word pairs or overall semantic equivalence. We equate "giving food" with "remembering the covenant"; "his fearers" are those with whom he has made "his covenant." Or we look for a historical nexus: the covenant at Sinai co-occurred with the providing of food in the wilderness. But just because similarity in structure promotes a semantic relationship does not mean that difference in structure prevents it. As our other example, Ps 106:35, shows, there can be semantic correlations even in the absence of structural repetition. Should we not consider Ps 106:35 to be a semantic parallelism? The psycholinguistic results that Greenstein cites likewise do not prove that semantic similarity cannot occur in lines differently structured. They simply underscore the tendency for grammatical and semantic parallelisms to co-occur, because both are part of the same associative process (see chapter 4). In short, I cannot agree with Greenstein that syntactic repetition lies at the base of parallelism and that semantic parallelism is a result of this repetition. In many cases it may be the other way around: the desire to repeat a thought may have produced a syntactic repetition along with it. There is no reason to give syntax priority over semantics (or vice versa); both are important aspects of parallelism, along with some other aspects to be mentioned later.

But let us return to a fuller explanation of Greenstein's thesis. What Greenstein means by syntactic repetition is syntactic repetition at the level of the deep structure; syntactically similar sentences have the same deep

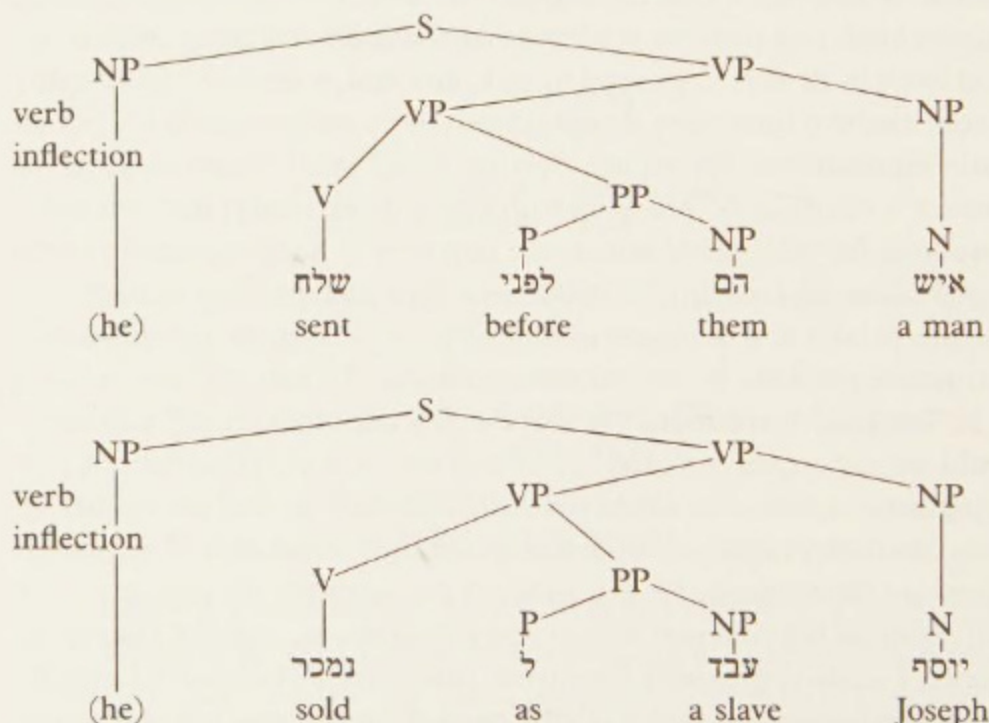
structure no matter what their surface structure may be. (If the surface structure is identical, then they are also parallel even if the deep structure is not—cf. Greenstein's note 20.) By a method similar to but linguistically more rigorous than Geller's reconstructed sentence, Greenstein shows through a series of tree diagrams that parallel sentences have the same deep structure.⁵ Thus, for example, two clauses as apparently disparate as

Ps 105:17

שלח לפניהם איש
לעבד נמכר יוסף

He sent before them a man
As a slave was Joseph sold.

are diagrammed (Greenstein, p. 48, after removing the passivization from the second clause) as:



The diagram should be read as follows. S is a sentence which consists of a subject (or topic) represented by a noun-phrase (NP) and a predicate (or comment) represented by a verb-phrase (VP). The NP is manifested in this case through the pronominal inflection of the verb ("he"). The VP comprises a VP and an object in the form of a NP. The VP itself comprises a verb (V) and an adverbial modifier in the form of a prepositional phrase (PP), consisting of a preposition (P) and a noun-phrase. The NP which is the direct object of the verb is represented by a noun (N).

Greenstein's work has the merit of attempting to put the analysis of parallelism on a firm linguistic (*viz.* grammatical) basis. His concern, like Geller's and mine, was specifically with parallelism, not with poetry. Greenstein took grammar about as far as it could go in terms of parallelism by making it the criterion for the identification of parallelism.

M. O'Connor's concern in *Hebrew Verse Structure*, on the other hand, was with poetry, not with parallelism *per se*, and he took grammar as far as it could go as the basis for describing biblical poetry.⁶

Collins and Geller accepted the convention in modern scholarship of what constitutes a poetic line and did not attempt to define it; they were concerned with describing the various grammatical patterns that occur within or between lines of poetry. O'Connor's quest was to define the poetic line, and this he did solely in terms of grammar: a line consists of a series of syntactic constraints—limits on the number of units, constituents, and clauses that it may contain. O'Connor's use of grammar to define the line is analogous to Greenstein's use of grammar to define parallelism.

In doing this, O'Connor gives primacy to the line over the couplet as the basic poetic entity, whereas the others, because they are dealing with syntactic relationships often involving more than one line, tend to give more prominence to the couplet. Since the line is of primary concern to O'Connor, the relationship between lines, which in many cases involves parallelism, becomes secondary. O'Connor's study, then, like Collins's, is a study of the grammatical structure of poetry rather than a study of parallelism *per se*. It does, however, have much to contribute to the study of parallelism. I will summarize it in part here and will have recourse to many of its details in subsequent chapters.

O'Connor disarms and probably antagonizes biblical scholars by calling parallelism "a congeries of phenomena" (*HVS*, 5). But in saying this he does not mean that parallelism does not exist or that it is not important, only that it is composed of many different phenomena, some of them syntactic and others not, some of them admitting to precise description and others not. O'Connor feels that the reason that former scholars have had so much trouble defining parallelism is that they confused these different phenomena. They failed to perceive what I call the multiaspect and multi-level nature of parallelism; that is, parallelism may involve semantics, grammar, and/or other linguistic features, and it may occur on the level of the word, line, couplet, or over a greater textual span.

The parts of parallelism that O'Connor deals with most extensively (*i.e.*, those that are most amenable to his linguistic approach) are those that have

(cf. Gen 17:12; Ex 12:43; Neh 9:2). So the first line of Lam 5:2 taken alone could signify the loss of one's ancestral land to a nonrelative, but the second line redefines this with forceful clarity by speaking of the loss of one's living place to a non-Israelite.

On the word level there are grammatical equivalences and also contrasts: נחלתנו and בתינו are both from the same word class (nouns with possessive suffixes) and serve the same syntactic function (subject). But the first is feminine and singular and the second is masculine and plural. There is complete grammatical identity between לזרים and לנכרים.

In addition to these grammatical and semantic aspects, phonology comes into play. There are three phonologic equivalences in these two lines:

נחלתנו נהפכה ל // לנכרים

nhl . . . nh . . . l // lnk . . .

נחלתנו // בתינו

-ataynu // -ataynu

לזרים // לנכרים

-rim // -rim

The phonologic equivalences underline the semantic and grammatical ones. In the last two phonologic pairings, *-ataynu // -ataynu* and *-rim // -rim*, words which are grammatically and semantically similar also contain similar sounds. The first, *nhl // lnk*, is more striking (but not uncommon, as I will show in chapter 5), because it equates by sound words which are not otherwise linguistically equivalent. This pairing thereby binds the two lines even more closely, forming a frame of sounds around this verse.

All of these equivalences are present in a relatively small and simple parallelism, containing only five words approximately evenly distributed in two lines with the same surface structure. It stands to reason that in longer, more complex parallelisms the possibilities for various types of equivalences and contrasts increase. Since I cannot present all of them, I have elected to isolate several and will devote separate chapters to them. I will also point out, occasionally, the tension that may exist among these equivalences—i.e., among the different aspects of parallelism. The aspects to be discussed are 1) the grammatical, 2) the lexical, 3) semantic, and 4) the phonological. These will be analyzed on the levels of the word and the line or clause. The following chart provides an overview of these aspects and how they manifest themselves on the two levels.

Level	Aspect		
	Grammatical	Lexical-Semantic	Phonological
Word	morphological equivalence and/or contrast	word pairs	sound pairs
Line or clause	syntactic equivalence and/or contrast	semantic relationship between lines	phonological equivalence of lines

As the chart shows, the goal of this book is to present an overarching, integrated, and linguistically based description of biblical parallelism.

In most cases I will be dealing with lines that are parallel, but, when it comes to the level of the word or other single constituent of a line, one must include, as Dahood has done (cf. *RSP* I, 80–81, 87), words and phrases that are in juxtaposition or in collocation when these show the same kinds of linguistic correspondences.⁹ (Juxtaposition is the occurrence of both parts of the pair within one phrase;¹⁰ collocation is an unspecified relationship at an unspecified distance within the same passage.) The same word pair or sound pair may appear in parallel lines, or in combination within the same line or at a greater distance from one another, no matter if the passage is prose or poetry. They are thus to be regarded as part of the same phenomenon of parallelism. The principle behind the pairing is the same, regardless of the context in which it occurs. Parallelism, juxtaposition, and collocation are all part of the same phenomenon of combining elements which are in some way linguistically equivalent. This is what I mean by parallelism.

That the pairing in juxtaposition and collocation is in essence the same as the pairing in parallel lines can be demonstrated by the fact that the same pair of words may occur in all three arrangements. One example is אהל, “tent,” and משכן, “tabernacle, dwelling place.” This pair is found in parallel lines in

Num 24:5

מה טוב אהליך יעקב
משכנתך ישראל

How good are your tents [*hl*], O Jacob;

Your dwelling places [*mškn*], O Israel. [cf. also Isa 54:2; Jer 30:18; Ps 78:60]

This pair is found in what I would call a prose parallelism, but what Dahood calls juxtaposition, in

2 Sam 7:6

ואהיה מתהלך באהל ובמשכן

I have moved about in Tent and Tabernacle [*b^{hl} wbmškn*].

The pair is in juxtaposition in

Job 21:28

ואיה אהל משכנות רשעים

Where is the dwelling-tent of the wicked [*b^{hl} mšknwt*].

The juxtaposition is reversed in Ps 78:55 and Ps 120:5. And, finally, the pair is in collocation in

Ps 15:1

מי יגור באהלך
מי ישכן בהר קדשך

Who can sojourn in your tent [*b^{hl}*];
Who can dwell [*yškn*] on your holy mountain.

The last verse is particularly instructive because it not only shows that parallelism, juxtaposition, and collocation belong to the same phenomenon, but also that equivalence in one linguistic aspect need not imply equivalence in all linguistic aspects.

I have adopted Dahood's designation of "collocation" for the word pair in Ps 15:1 even though the verse consists of parallel lines. What makes the pairing of our words here different from their pairing in Num 24:5 is that in Num 24:5 *b^{hl}* and *mškn* are both lexical and semantic equivalents while in Ps 15:1 *b^{hl}* and *yškn* are lexical equivalents but not semantic equivalents (the semantic pairs are אהלך // הר קדשך, "your tent // your holy mountain," and יגור // ישכן, "sojourn // dwell"). If we bring grammar into the discussion we see that the pair is also grammatically equivalent in Num 24:5; in Ps 15:1 there is no direct grammatical relationship between אהלך and ישכן.¹¹ Thus the types of equivalences manifest in parallelism can be quite different. We have here two parallelisms in which the same lexical pair behaves very differently. Thus we see, once again, that to base an analysis of parallelism solely on semantics or grammar is to miss some of the subtle play that may be present. Parallelism gets its effectiveness from the interplay of equivalences in the various linguistic aspects. But before we can appreciate this interplay we must investigate these aspects individually. This is the task to which the next three chapters are devoted.